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DU CALVET'S MEMOIR.

[Translated for the North American.]

(CONCLUDED.)

[Extract of Mr. Du Calvet's letter to the Canadians.]

In the commencement of the last troubles, the report came suddenly that the American General had detached a body of 200 men to give assistance to Fort Cedars, which was attacked by our militia. Our officers who were near, found they had at hand but 30 Canadians. They collected in haste 60 Savages, and notwithstanding the inequality so visible, they attacked the enemy and overthrew them at the first outset; with 80 victorious men which remained, they took 180 prisoners with their commander at their head; at this victory Fort Cedars fell. This was the most brilliant action which had illustrated the arms of the King in this country; but it cost dear to one of our brave Canadian gentlemen, (Mr. De Montigny,) who, with his own hand, had made prisoner of one of the principal officers of the enemy; at their departure the Americans burned and pillaged his property. These losses he modestly exposed to the government, the officers of which answered—"this is the fortune of war which is displayed in a similar manner in the English Colonies of America, that it was equally just to indemnify these Colonies," which amounted to an admission of national inability to indemnify. This case however is neither similar in circumstances, nor analogous in consequences.

At the invasion of the Colony, an American Proclamation had been issued guaranteeing to those Canadians who should remain tranquil, the peaceful enjoyment of their heritages. A Royal Proclamation was issued to force the people from this neutrality. Is it to the glory of the sovereign to deceive his subjects by the sophistry of words, through his representative? if so then these words ought no more to be respected and obeyed. The affirmative would not be policy for those who labor for the safety of the Empire. The consequences here would be terrible. At the first invasion the Canadians would be forced to bury themselves in the inaction of neutrality. Would they face the ravages of a war in favour of a sovereign who had declared in advance that they could expect no reparation for their losses or compensation for their services from him.

I conclude, gentlemen, by the public testimony of one of the noble Lords of England, (Lord Sheffield) who in a learned and patriotic book, has put the last seal to the confirmation of your hopes and your rights. "The wise policy of the Legislature" said he "ought not to waver a moment to gratify the Canadians with a form of Government suited to their wishes and demands, because the best means that England can adopt for the preservation of that country, is to promise contentment and satisfaction, and to place this contentment on a firm foundation. We should adopt a system to make them more contented, more happy, and better than the American Colonies which surround them, can promise or offer them."

All this is publicly declared. Your liberty is then in your hands. The only thing remaining for you now, is to demand that liberty in a proper manner. A people animated by such good and such magnanimous sentiments as your, could not choose in preference to civil emancipation the infamy of slavery for themselves and posterity.

It would be the height of glory for me to be able to claim some part in this happy revolution, which is now the subject of my reflections and labours. At least I can assure you that when it shall be accomplished, your national prosperity will suffice to console me for all my personal sufferings. I cannot conclude by sentiments more worthy of you, and as your compatriot, I dare to say more worthy of myself.

I have the honor to be with
the most perfect respect,
Gentlemen
Your very humble and
Obedient servant,
PIERRE DU CALVET.

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At last Mr. Du Calvet had the promise from the Colonial Secretary at London that Governor Haldimand should be recalled, and that he (Mr. Du Calvet) would have the opportunity of substantiating his charges against him. After this solemn pledge, Mr. Du Calvet in the Spring of 1785 crossed the Atlantic, and came to Canada to collect his proofs against Gen. Haldimand. The Governor was really re-called to answer several accusations brought against him. The Governor left of course in a frigate;—Mr. Du Calvet, faithful to his promise to the Colonial Secretary, left about the same time, with his only son, in a merchant-ship. He had collected all the necessary proofs against the Governor. This is the last that was ever heard of him. Vague rumours were spread abroad that during the voyage, he was taken with his son, put into a bag and thrown overboard. The accusation of this horrible murder was brought against Gen. Haldimand, but he was protected, by the ministers, and left for Switzerland, his native country. Such was the end of the poor unfortunate and honest Pierre Du Calvet.—[ED. NOTE.

JOURNAL
OF A POLITICAL PRISONER.

[Translated for the North American.]

(CONTINUED.)

On the morning of the 12th, we left St. Johns by the rail-road for Laprairie. We were tied two by two, and our guards were seated on either side, in the cars.

We took the steam-boat at Laprairie and it was not long before we were at Montreal. No one was allowed to speak to us on board. We were no doubt expected there, for an immense crowd was assembled on the wharves. This rabble among which were Dr. Arnoldi, Sen. and several other violent tories, taking a very active part, was exclusively composed of loyalists; in those days of public calamity no radical dared to show his face in the streets of Montreal. We owe a great deal to the military guard which accompanied us, they protected us against this loyal *rabble*, whose threats drowned themselves in loud and boisterous vociferations. The valiant Dr. Arnoldi who is a magistrate, was one of the most noisy. We were first taken to the old jail, from whence we were escorted to the new jail by a body of volunteer cavalry and infantry. This march looked more like a triumph than any thing else in the eyes of Sir John Colborne; we certainly were not the most brilliant part of the procession, for we were handcuffed, our clothes torn, our faces were emaciated from the effects of hunger and all kinds of privation which we had endured; nor had we shaved for weeks past. Nevertheless, in spite of all these things, so powerful is the incentive of a good cause that far from being ashamed of the state in which we appeared then, we felt proud and honored; it seemed to us that we were the conquerors. I do not know if it was fancy with me, but our conductors seemed to me as if they were troubled with guilty consciences. Indeed both parties might have been right. Had we not, fought in defence of our rights and with the intention of getting rid of the galling yoke under which our country was suffering so much? Were we not the champions of liberty? Were not these volunteers, on the contrary, working with all their might to rivet British chains on the Canadas? Were they not the supporters of tyranny?

I have perhaps dwelt too long on the history of our sufferings, from the moment we were taken prisoners to the day we entered the dwelling prepared for us by Miss Victoria Guelph's minions. Indeed we are not those who have been the most illtreated; but we are more accurate in describing our own feelings than those of others who have suffered; and that might be because we feel a kind of glory in relating them, more particularly when we have suffered for liberty's sake.

At this present moment there is a prisoner in this jail, who has not been in any battle, who has not invited any one to take up arms, but is an honest and quiet farmer. It was deemed proper to incarcerate him under the accusation of HIGH TREASON, because once in his life, and that too, many months before the troubles, he had attended a public meeting where the rights of his country had been discussed. When the volunteers arrived at his house in the dead of the night, he got alarmed and secreted himself in his cellar. One of the brigands who was in a high state of intoxication, found out his retreat, and although the poor farmer was unarmed and made no resistance, the volunteer pierced him in several parts of his body with a bayonet, in such a horrible manner that his life was considered in great danger. In this terrible state he was seized, bound and thrown into a Canadian train, without any thing to bind up his wounds, or to stop the blood. From St. Pierre, where he resided, he was taken to Laprairie in one of the coldest nights of the winter, and from thence was immediately hurried to Montreal. This man whose name is Pierre Derige dit Laplante, was the whole winter in jail and was oftentimes considered in a precarious state of health from the effects of his wounds. The volunteers who treated him in this cruel and inhuman manner were James McDonald a justice of the peace, and Camille Lacombe, a merchant, both of Laprairie.

The greatest number of the prisoners were arrested without *warrants*, or without having the reading of such a document, and without knowing what accusation could be brought against them. A great number of those who fall into the last category, are yet in jail, where they have been for many months. Wives are threatened and illtreated, because they are suspected of having facilitated their husbands' evasion, or because they believe these women know where their husbands are concealed. A word, a look, a mere suspicion was more than enough to have a man sent to a dungeon. Woe to those who had private enemies, these had a good opportunity to take revenge. Affidavits were made against penceful men and the authorities would receive these affidavits with great complacency. They were arrested, and dragged to jail where they were sure to remain until it was the pleasure of the Attorney General to take notice of their case; several months would pass in this manner; and oftentimes innocent men would be treated thus. If a miscreant was in debt to an honest man, he would immediately go and swear treason against him, and this unfortunate creditor would be sent to jail, from whence he no more could sue his perfidious debtor. If a thief thought that the presence of the proprietor would retard his design of stealing his property, an affidavit was an excellent means of getting rid of him. This same state of moral turpitude exists even now, but in a lesser degree than when the troubles broke out.

Sometime after the battle of St. Dennis, a body of British passed through St. Ours; a young man who was in the street of the village, was ordered to stop; he did not hear the command or else he got scared, at any rate he continued his route. The brave British fired on him and he fell, pierced with eleven balls.

At the same time some British cavalry pursued four or five young men who were unarmed, and discharged their firearms at them, which happily had no effect. These young men saved their lives by escaping into an adjoining wood. I should not finish if I was to minute down all the facts with which I became personally acquainted; those I have cited are sufficient of themselves, it seems to me. I hasten to give the history of our incarceration and of the sufferings that we (the state prisoners,) have to encounter and bear in this palace of the blessed Queen of England, at whose tender mercies some 400 of us are now left in this abominable and infectious abode.

At the moment I am writing these lines, (28th March, 1838,) I am still confined in the new jail, and God alone knows for what length of time. It is with great harshness that Mr. De St. Ours, the sheriff, asked us our names, had us handcuffed before we left the old jail and shut us up in the cells of the new one. He knew me well, he had been my school mate at the college, he had even called on me at my house, and I had exchanged this politeness by calling too at his house; nevertheless he affected not to be acquainted with me, and asked for my name. This worthy placeman was swimming with the tide. With what pleasure would be have conducted one of his countrymen to the scaffold for the sake of pleasing his masters!! for I know not a more dreadful pest to society than an unworthy creature that has been elevated to some high office. He is to be dreaded if he has a tyrant for master. In proportion to his desire to hide his want of talents, does he manifest his servility and baseness, and through fear of displeasing his wicked employer, he generally surpasses him in acts of barbarity.

Never has Roch De St Ours uttered a word of sympathy in our favor, At first he visited us every day, but it was ordinarily with his hat on his head and without saying a word to us. However, sometime after our incarceration, American sympathy spread terrible alarm among the loyal gentry. It was a common rumor at Montreal that the Canadian refugees were coming back to this country and that this city would be besieged; it was also reported that their army was very formidable in numbers and in materials of war. No doubt that Mr. De St. Ours was a devoted servant of his masters, but he wished also to be a prudent man. He bethought all at once of the vicissitudes of fortune and thought that one day or another a state prisoner might perchance become the sheriff or the jailer, and that the present sheriff might in his turn become a state prisoner. Some of my fellow prisoners being astonished at the sudden change they had observed in the sheriff's conduct, I answered them that this extraordinary politeness of his had been blown into him by a breeze that came from the other side of latitude 45. Since that moment he has been polite or impolite, harsh or humane according as the rumors were warlike or of a peaceful character. He was a regular political barometer, a living newspaper, from which we could guess at the news from the states; an exact telegraph, from the appearance of which we could learn what we had to expect or to fear. Such an instrument was very precious for us poor unfortunate prisoners, to whom it was not allowed to see any friend, and to whom was interdicted the very sight of a printed paper.

Although Martial law had been declared at the beginning of December, yet the civil Courts were not suspended; and even at the Criminal Court of the month of March, nearly the whole charge of the Chief Justice to the Jury was against the crime of high treason on which His Honor told them they were to be called upon to give their verdicts. However no political trial has as yet taken place; the only thing the Judges have decided on, was, that the political prisoners could be admitted to bail. The Sheriff was immediately summoned to set at liberty certain gentlemen who offered to give bail, but he answered that *he had nothing to do with these gentlemen*, and that they were under the custody of the military. He undoubtedly had received orders from his master, in fact he confessed it to some of us. Since that time we seldom saw the poor creature.

As I have been shut up in this jail for four months past, and perhaps may stop in it for a long time yet to come, I shall give a description of it. It is a building of cut-stone, in the form of the letter T, the upper part of which faces the St. Lawrence, whilst the base runs towards the *Coteau Baron*. A wall 15 feet high encircles this fine edifice, which is four stories high; the front part measures 230 feet long, whilst the wing is 100 feet long. A chapel of large dimensions is situated in the fifth story and is in the centre of the building. The first story of the jail, which is nearly fifteen feet under ground, is composed of dungeons, it is the most unhealthy place of the jail where air and light are nearly excluded. In the second and third stories are the cells of which I shall give a more minute description, because the greater number of the political prisoners are lodged in them. A passage six feet wide, at the end of which is a window with iron grates, divides two rows of cells; these cells are each 8 feet long by 5 1-2 wide. The floor in these cells and in the passage are of oak, as also the doors. Each cell is encircled by a brick wall. The cells and passage are about 12 feet high in their highest elevation; these as well as the dungeons, are all arched. When we are in those cells we are surrounded with six different walls; nevertheless life would be supportable in them, if we could have more light and more air than we do. But each cell receives light only through an aperture of about one foot square and at the distance of nine feet from the floor; and then more than half the light that would penetrate into those cells, is stopt by iron grates and dirty glasses. When we were even first put into them, we could see so as to read about six hours in the day, but with very great difficulty. Above the door of each cell at nine feet from the floor, there is an opening with iron grates, through which the heat penetrates into the cell from a stove placed in the passage. The door of the cells are about 5 feet high by 2 feet wide; they are double, and 2 1-2 inches thick, and strengthened with large iron nails. The hinges, bolts, iron-bars, &c. &c., of each door may weigh about 50 lbs. The pillars are 7 inches square. Such are the cells into which hundreds of men are thrown, without a chair, bench, table or even a little straw to sleep on.—Oh, the tender mercies of the British government! how incomprehensible are they to a Canadian!!

It is unnecessary to say that such a dwelling is very unhealthy, inasmuch as it is impossible that pure air can circulate in it. Besides that, in each ward one of the cells has been converted into a privy, without even closing the opening above the door, it is therefore easy to imagine what infection such an arrangement spreads throughout the jail. Add to this the fact that the walls have not been white-washed since we have been confined here; that the floors are very seldom scrubbed, and that the prisoners are not furnished with the means of keeping themselves clean, and you will have a just idea of the miserable condition to which we have been reduced by the *maternal* government of our *blessed* Queen. It is then no wonder that we have been visited with those insects which are the shame and torment of clean and decent men.

A great number of the political prisoners were at first put into the dungeons. They have since been taken away from there, I, with all those of the ward where I am, have been shut up in our cells for three whole weeks; by the regulations of the jail, the felons could not be shut up but from eight o'clock in the evening to the same hour in the morning. I have always suspected that the sheriff in ordering us to be confined thus in our cells, was listening to his own vindictive feelings towards us, whilst other political prisoners at the same time were occupying cells to which they were not confined.

Why this distinction between prisoners accused of the same offence? It is a question which Mr. De St. Ours will undoubtedly have to answer, one day or an. other. It would take too long a time to describe all our sufferings during the three weeks we were shut up in our cells; we suffered severely from cold and want of exercise, the result of which was dyspep-